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MEMORIAL

OF

HON. WILLIAM KELLY.

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OF

HON. WILLIAM KELLY.

PRESENTED TO THE

New York State Agricultural Society,

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING, JANUARY 22, 1873,

BY

MARSENA R. PATRICK,
EX-PRESIDENT.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

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At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the New York State Agricultural Society, held at its rooms in Albany, on the 13th February, 1872: On motion of ex-President Gould, M. R. Patrick, ex-President of the Society, was requested to prepare a Memorial of the late ex-President Kelly, to be embodied in the Transactions of the Society for the current year.

In accordance with this request the following paper has been prepared for the Transactions.

MEMORIAL.

Since our last annual meeting, many articles in relation to our deceased friend, the Honorable William Kelly, have appeared in the newspapers and journals of the day, resolutions of respect to his memory have been drawn with care by distinguished professors and scholars in the many institutions of learning with which he was connected, and gentlemen renowned in the pulpit, at the bar, and in the halls of legislation, have given eloquent utterance to their admiration of his rare character.

Yet, to those who have closely observed Mr. Kelly these many years, both at home and in the world, there has seemed, in all these glowing tributes to his memory, something wanting to render them complete — to present, in his full proportions, this modest, unassuming, but extraordinary man.

And the reason of this will, perhaps, be understood, from the fact, that he moved in so many different spheres of action, each distinct from and seldom touching the other, he touched society at so many different and opposite points, that those who knew him well in one sphere, or came in contact with him from the one side only, caught but the lineaments developed in a single aspect and visible from their respective stand points.

The painter may give true expression to the features as viewed from his own focus, but the sculptor alone can bring out, in full relief, the perfect form that duplicates the model from whatever point his work is viewed. So in studying the character of William Kelly. We may gaze

with pleasure and admiration at the beautiful photographs thrown off by skillful artists and recognize their truthfulness to him in certain aspects, but they reveal not the rounded fullness and rare symmetry of the man!

Who was William Kelly?

That "blood will tell," is an axiom that holds good in the human race, as in those lower animals whose pedigrees gentlemen of this society are accustomed to trace with rigid scrutiny, far back, to some ancestor of unusual vigor and excellence, that has transmitted his own strong points to his descendants.

A hundred years ago, there lived in the little town of Bailieborough, county Cavan, in the north of Ireland, a family by the name of Kelly. They were not of the nobility, nor of the landed gentry, though they had resided for generations on their own lands, and were known as a family of sterling character, simple tastes, industrious habits, and firm adherents of the Scotch Presbyterian Church.

One son, Robert, born in 1767, while yet a young man, engaged in the linen trade, and with a view to the extension of that business, arranged for a partnership with two of his townsmen, brothers, by the name of James. The sudden death of the younger James, before the papers were signed, broke up the arrangement, and William James sailed for America. He settled in this city, (Albany) accumulated a large fortune, and founded the James family, so well known to old Albanians.

Robert Kelly continued in business but a short time when the Irish patriots began to band themselves together for one more effort in behalf of their native land; an effort associated in the mind of every American with the name of Emmet. In those movements young Kelly took an active part. He was a leading spirit in the preparations that were making for the conflict, and was enrolled as an officer of the Revolutionary forces; but before those preparations

were, in any sense, matured, he was denounced to the government authorities, who ordered his instant arrest as a traitor. "A faithful friend gave him notice of the approach of soldiers sent to secure him, barely in time for him to make his escape from his father's house. That hurried adieu was the last he gave to his early home; for, satisfied that the authorities had such information as would ensure his arrest and conviction if he remained in Ireland, he felt that he could do nothing more for his country, and so, resolved to seek for liberty in another land. With difficulty he succeeded in reaching a seaport and getting on board a vessel bound to New York, where he arrived in the year 1796." [1]

Very soon after his arrival in this country he engaged in business, having sufficient capital to establish himself in the linen trade, with which he was already acquainted; but before the close of '97, we find him at the head of a house doing a large business in jobbing and dry goods, his first partner, Stewart Mollan, being, like himself, an Irishman.

In that house were bred up some of the most successful merchants of the next generation. A third partner was taken into the firm and, after a time, Mollan retired. The firm was, from that time, known as Kelly & Morrison, and extended its business over the South and South-west, being favorably known during the war of 1812-15 as a very safe, honorable and patriotic house. When Congress, on the 18th February 1813, passed an act authorizing the borrowing of sixteen millions of dollars, proposals were advertised, but times were hard, and less than four millions were offered. Finally, the patriotic merchants of New York came forward, headed by the famous Jacob Barker, and put their names to a subscription for raising the necessary amount.

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[1] See letter of William Kelly to Edgar S. Van Winkle.

On that subscription the names of Kelly & Morrison are down for twenty thousand dollars.

After a very successful business career of more than twenty years, Mr. Kelly retired, with a handsome fortune, in 1819, at a little more than fifty years of age. He had never returned to Ireland, but was married in this country, in 1803, to an Irish lady, who died before his retirement, leaving three sons and an infant daughter. Some years after her decease Mr. Kelly was married to a Mrs. Parr, an English lady, whose maiden name was Cauldwell; one of a family that came to this country about the time of the Birmingham riots. The Cauldwells being Dissenters — Baptists —were roughly handled during the riot, and their house sacked by the mob.

This union was productive of important results to both families, in their social and domestic life, and in their religious and business associations.

The Kellys had been Presbyterians for generations — Scotch Presbyterians — and Robert Kelly, with his family, were attendants upon the old Wall Street Church. Their associations with the Cauldwells, gradually brought them into relations of intimacy with the Baptists, whose views were ultimately adopted, and the sons and daughters, in after years, became communicants in that church.

From 1819 until 1823, Mr. Robert Kelly was not in business, and his children were all in school, with the exception of John, the oldest, born in 1804, who had decided to become a merchant, and in 1822, at seventeen years of age, had been placed in the counting-house of the late James McCall. The announcement of William, not long after, that he, too, would be a merchant, induced the father once more to resume business, solely for the purpose of establishing these two sons in trade. Accordingly, in 1823, he returned to the old house in Pearl street, and took his accustomed seat in the counting-room, as managing partner of the firm of

Kelly, Morrison & Clason, though Morrison soon after retired.

Under their father's careful eye, the two boys were trained to business. Not only were the old customers of former years brought back to the house, but new, and widely extended connections were formed in all the Southern States. John was destined to the foreign trade and trained accordingly. William was to be the home manager and general director. For two years he applied himself to the study of trade, with all the assiduity and sound judgment for which he was, even then, remarkable, and before he was eighteen years of age, seemed to be master of his profession in all its details.

In 1825 a terrible blow fell upon these sons and upon their family, in the death of their father. He bequeathed to his sons the valuable business connections he had established, and, by the provisions of his will, enabled his sons, in spite of their minority, to carry forward the plans already projected. Clason retired very soon after their father's death, and these boys were left to stand, or fall, alone.

Let us pause here to take a view of the situation and of the preparation of these young men to master it, as the clear head and strong hand of their father had mastered it. That father, as is evident, was no common man. He is described by one who knew him intimately, as "a man of inflexible integrity, great business capacity and remarkably kind in his intercourse with those in any way associated with him, very energetic, and prompt almost to sternness. He showed especial interest in the success of young merchants, some of whom still speak of him with grateful recollections." By a lady, who was very intimate in his family when young, he is spoken of as "a warm-hearted, genial man — very frank and hearty — stouter than Mr. William, who of all the sons most resembled him in person — a very Irishman in his looks and bearing."

The late James McCall, himself a prominent merchant, was a clerk for Mr. Robert Kelly, and in speaking of his more distinguished sons, William and Robert, said of them. "Their strong character, sound judgment, indomitable perseverance and unsullied integrity, *they inherited from their father.* He was a remarkable man; and as I look back over the host of business men I have known in this city, (New York), I think Robert Kelly was the best merchant I ever knew. Prompt, resolute, energetic and inflexibly just, in all matters of business, he was at the same time kind, generous, and took a hearty interest in all that concerned his clerks and employees, watching over them while they remained in his service, and standing by them when they engaged in business for themselves." Mr. McCall added, "I am certain that I never felt so proud in my life as when Mr. Kelly entered my counting-room, one day, and walking up to me, said, in his short, almost stern, way: 'James! I made you a merchant! I think you are a good merchant! I want you to take my son, John, and make a merchant of him! Train him as I did you! No favors because he is my son!'"

Trained up in such a school, the sons could hardly fail to make good business men, but a nearer view of their home life, as near a view as is permissible in a paper like this, will reveal other and powerful influences that impelled them to an earnest life.

John Kelly had left school for the counting-room at about seventeen years of age. He was now a young gentleman twenty years of age, of buoyant spirits, pleasing address, cultivated taste, and evinced great facility in the acquirement of modern languages, being especially regarded as a very perfect master of French. William Kelly, born on the 4th of February, 1807, and a little more than two years the junior of John, was, perhaps, more staid and sober in his temperament than his older brother; a closer

student, a more thorough scholar in all that he attempted to master, a born mathematician, and one of the most rapid accountants then known in the city. In Wheaton school, Chatham Square, he had had all the advantages that pertained to the breadth of the English high school.

Robert, born in December, 1808, and almost two years younger than William, was *the* student, par excellence, and at the time of his father's death, had been two years in Columbia College. Trained at first in the classical school of the learned and eccentric John Walsh, his final preparation for college was under the immediate direction of the celebrated blind teacher, Nelson, then regarded as the most successful instructor in the city. Robert Kelly was Nelson's favorite and succeeded in passing an examination before he was fourteen years of age, that placed him at the head of his class in Columbia College; a position that he retained throughout the entire collegiate course.

To these brothers their father had not only bequeathed his property and his business, but he had bequeathed to their loving care and gentle guardianship, their second mother and her daughter, and his own young daughter, their only sister by blood, but not the only sister in their affections.

In that old home in Cliff street, now a part of the great commercial house of Phelps, Dodge & Co., might then be found a family group, united by bonds stronger even than the ties of blood — the unity of thought, of principle and of purpose, in the attainment of one common object. Earnestly engaged in their commercial pursuits during the hours of business, the leisure hours of these young men were largely given to the cultivation of their minds, under the instruction of private tutors, by reading, and by whatever other agencies seemed to them most judicious.

While mingling in society sufficiently to be at home in its best circles, their lives were regarded as too valuable to

be frittered away in idle drawing-rooms and gay saloons, where fashion alone presided. Literally recognizing God in all their ways, their prosperity was His care, and they grew, continually, in favor with Him and with their fellow-men.

Shortly after their father's death a trifling circumstance, resulting in a momentary mortification, led William Kelly to assume the care of the financial department of the firm, and to resolve that they would never allow themselves to be placed where it would be necessary to ask a favor that might possibly be refused. From that time forth, provision was made, long in advance, for every moneyed want of the firm; so that when the sky was most clouded and money most difficult to obtain, they could lend, but never borrowed. This became the habit of the house, and whilst with prudent liberality they granted every reasonable favor, they were never known as borrowers of money. They asked no endorsement and gave none. If a business friend came to them in distress, they examined his affairs, and if satisfied of his solvency, they loaned him the cash that could be spared, but no endorsement. And this was William Kelly's inflexible rule to the end of life.

Knowing that on account of their youth they must do a *safe* business, they early overhauled their large list of customers, which was made up from all the southern states. The *moral* character of each individual on the list was canvassed and marked, as well as his pecuniary ability and standing. From this old list a new one was framed, excluding therefrom every person of known immoral tendencies, without any reference whatever to his financial standing and ability, adopting it as a standing rule of the house, "to sell, for cash, to all comers, but to *encourage* business and keep accounts with no man whose *moral* character was doubtful."

Guided by such rules as these, backed up by extraordi-

nary business capacity, industry and perseverance, these young men, before the close of 1826, had established the reputation of their house on a foundation solid as the rock, and destined never to be shaken while they guided it.

Robert had graduated in the summer of that year, at the head of his class, being then a little more than seventeen years of age. His father had left to him, as "to each of his children, a handsome sum, but not enough to maintain them, separately, in the style of living to which they had been accustomed; it was therefore necessary that some profession or business should be chosen by Robert which was likely to be remunerative." A letter of William Kelly, written nearly seventeen years ago, describes the process. He says:

"A council of the young brothers, aged seventeen, nineteen and twenty-one was accordingly held to decide what Robert should do. The course of thought in the deliberation was much in this wise: 'Robert is qualified for attempting any of the learned professions, and would in time no doubt be successful; but it will require many years; and he will certainly have reached middle life, perhaps old age, before he accumulates such fortune as will give him the command of his own time. On the other hand he is equally qualified for commercial life, where in all probability he would, within ten or fifteen years, acquire all the money he needed, and thereafter might dispose of his time as he thought proper.' The brothers urged him to join them in business, and assured him of their intention to place him on an equal footing with themselves. He did not hesitate long but entered the counting-house."

After an apprenticeship of some eighteen months with his brothers, he became a partner in 1828, under the firm name of "J. & W. Kelly & Co." John went abroad, and spent the most of his time in Europe as manager of the

foreign department, to which he had been trained, and for which he was admirably fitted. To Robert was committed, in large degree, the home business, the supervision of clerks, and the carrying out of details in the various departments. Quoting again from William Kelly's letter, he says of Robert: "By the establishment of just and inflexible rules in every department, he acquired for himself and the house a reputation for integrity and fairness never excelled."

The older brother being so much abroad, William Kelly had become almost from the first, virtually the head of the house, and managing partner of the firm.

A very large business was now transacted by this firm, and as their customers were of their own selection, so to speak, under wisely established rules, they made scarcely any losses by bad debts. The fact that a customer in person, *selecting his own* goods, had not the slightest advantage over a correspondent who might *order* them, trusting to the honor, skill and taste of the house to *select for* him, secured to them not only as business, but as *personal* friends, a large class of merchants who always dreaded the fatigue, the expense, and the loss of three or four weeks time, which every trip to New York cost them in the old staging days, all which was saved to them through this inflexible rule of the house.

The character of the gentlemen doing business with the Kellys, and the immunity of their house from loss by bad debts, soon attracted the attention of several old merchants, a few of whom after discussing the matter, joined the Kellys in employing first class business men, thoroughly reliable, to travel in the States where their customers resided, and ascertain the standing, character and responsibility of the mercantile men in those States. The benefits resulting from such exact information, caused others to join this little association of merchants, and thus was laid the

foundation of that great Commercial Agency, which, to-day, employs one hundred thousand agents and gives the standing of every business house on the Continent.[1]

In the course of four or five years of successful trade, the brothers found themselves in a condition that enabled them to devote more time to their personal and domestic affairs. They accordingly built the fine house, No. 10 on Washington Square, and in the spring of 1833 took possession of it, making it their home until the breaking up of the family in the spring of 1842. Nor did they, in their prosperity, forget the claims that education has upon wealth. Among the first subscriptions that were made to the library fund of Brown University after Dr. Wayland's accession to the Presidency, was that of J. & W. Kelly & Co., in 1832, noticeable mainly from the fact that these very young merchants, all between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, were even then, taking an interest in the cause to which so much of their later lives were devoted.

Said a distinguished clergyman, when speaking of William Kelly a few weeks ago, "When he was twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, Mr. Kelly took me by the hand and gave me counsel; he advised me to prepare for a theological seminary and furnished me the money for my preparation; he sustained me while I was in the seminary and when I graduated he sent me a suit of clothes in which to make my public appearance; and when I was ordained he said quietly, to me, that a little money to start me in my profession would not be amiss, and placed a hundred dollars in my hand."

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[1] When Arthur Tappan failed in 1837, having a very wide business acquaintance himself, he determined to make it available. On his application, these lists were turned over to him and he established a mercantile agency, associating with him in the business his brother Lewis, and afterwards, Benjamin Douglas. When the Tappans went out, the agency was carried on by "B. Douglas & Co.," who transferred it to "Dun, Boyd & Co.," former clerks in the agency.

Another clergyman says, "My entire support in seminary and while preparing for the ministry was assumed by William Kelly, who directed me to draw upon him whenever I wanted money; but during all that period I never had an opportunity to mention my wants, or remind him of his engagement. I was on his mind and his check was forwarded before I could feel that it was needed."

The same statement, almost literally, comes from a Rev. D. D., now a professor in one of our Universities. He says that Mr. Kelly, when a young man, found him in a New York hat establishment, and very soon after, had him in a course of preparation for college and theological seminary. Many others have come forward, within the last year, to acknowledge like obligations to him in his early manhood, in regard to which his own lips had ever been sealed.

Nor were these benefactions and gifts of gold from that family, the only exponents of their desire to follow the Master's teachings; but the poor and the afflicted were sought out, their wants relieved and themselves placed in positions to secure a comfortable support through their own exertions. The orphans, and those who had none to help them, found in that family sympathy, counsel and strong arms both to sustain and defend them. In the Savings Banks, in the Colored Orphan Asylum and in the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, William Kelly felt a deep interest, and took a seat in their boards, while his brother Robert threw his wonderful energies into the work of reclaiming and educating the vicious, ill-trained, and ignorant children of the city, going early into the board of managers of the House of Refuge and being its President for many years.

By the great fire of the 16th of December 1835, the establishment of the Kellys in Pearl street was burned to the ground, and they were heavy losers, the insurance companies, which it was *then* supposed *could* not fail, being una-

ble to pay the losses; but William Kelly, with his usual foresight, and while the fire was raging, announced to his neighbors, with quiet decision, that there could be no hope for relief from the insurance companies, since a fire which burned over such an extent of territory, swept away the theory of insurance and brought an amount of loss at one time which the wealthiest companies could not pay. And while they, in the firmness of their faith, smiled at his reasoning, he reasoned further; that it was now winter, the present limited supply of manufactured brick could not be increased until another season and could not suffice to rebuild these many stores, in which, if any where, must be regained the wealth the flames were then destroying; and so, before daylight, he had despatched his agents along the Sound, to purchase all the brick required to rebuild his warehouses. By this promptness, he was early in the resumption of business and soon made up, in still more active trade, the losses of that night. With the same foresight and promptness he might easily have engaged *all* the existing stock of brick, to re-sell at double their price to his fellow-sufferers, but no such transaction ever stained the career of William Kelly.

Having thus re-established and largely increased their mercantile business after the fire, and having acquired sufficient wealth to satisfy their reasonable desires, the question as to a proper time for retiring from active commercial pursuits, began to be discussed, when an event occurred which hastened the fulfilment of a resolution already formed. It was the death of the oldest brother, John, in 1836, at the age of thirty-two years. He had never married, and for many years had spent the greater portion of his life in Europe. He is spoken of as a very accomplished gentleman, a favorite in society and greatly endeared to his brothers and the home circle by his amiable disposition, warm affections and generous character.

The surviving brothers, William and Robert, closed up the affairs of their house in the same year, and having established a new firm, of young men who had grown up in their employ, turned over to them the business so long conducted by Robert Kelly and his sons. From that time, the brothers never engaged in any business for themselves, or for their own account, having withdrawn from its absorbing cares, not to live in idleness, but with the determination to devote their lives to pursuits that would more directly benefit their fellow men. At the time of their retirement neither of these brothers had completed his thirtieth year.

More closely tied to the counting-room than either of his brothers, from his position as managing partner, William Kelly had never been abroad. He therefore availed himself of this first exemption from the absorbing cares of commercial life since leaving school at sixteen, to cross the ocean, and, especially, that he might visit his aged grandfather, at the old homestead in county Cavan, Ireland. The whitehaired patriach of almost ninety years, was overcome with his emotions, as he embraced this noble son of his exiled Robert — the very counterpart in person and in years, of his patriot boy, who, forty years before, received his last hurried embrace as he fled for life from this same home.

Mr. Kelly returned to New York just before the financial crash of 1837, and during the next three, or four years, was engaged, with his brother, in winding up their own affairs, (which required time, as the business of the whole continent was deranged,) and in steadying by their counsels and their money, the mercantile houses of their friends both South and North, especially several *young* firms whom they had encouraged to go into business, and would not permit to fail.

An eminent merchant of that day, who himself wea-

thered the gale nobly, speaking of certain firms in 1858, said, "the fact, once known, that the Kellys were guiding and directing and backing them, gave them such a standing as to dispel all fears as to their solvency and so they were enabled to ride out the storm. But for those boys," (he had known them from their childhood,) "many a stout merchant of to-day would have been a drummer, or clerking it since '37."[1] It was during this period that Mr. William Kelly travelled, quite extensively, in the Southern States, where he had a very wide acquaintance, and availed himself of every opportunity to gain correct information in regard to southern society and southern institutions.

It had been his intention to take up his residence in the country, immediately on retiring from mercantile life; but the disasters of '37, and the results following, taken in connection with the fact, that both he and his brother were leading lives of usefulness where they then lived, had hitherto prevented him from carrying out this design. The predilections of his brother Robert were rather for the city, where his studies could be pursued to greater advantage, and where he could better carry out his ideas in regard to popular education, to which cause he was already devoted. It was long before the family could bring their minds to break up the home in Washington Square, where they had spent so many happy years, and from which none had gone forth save that brother whom they had followed to his narrow house in 1836; but in the autumn of 1841, arrangements were finally made to leave the city in the spring following.

After very carefully searching the country within a hundred miles of New York, Wm. Kelly, with the approval of the lady who was to become his wife, purchased the

[1] An examination of the books of Wm. & Robt. Kelly, kept in the old Pearl street office until within the last few years, would go far to confirm this statement.

estate known as Ellerslie, in the town of Rhinebeck, on the Hudson, ninety miles above New York and fifty miles below Albany. In March, 1843, Robert Kelly was married to Miss Arietta A. Hutton, daughter of George Hutton Esq. of Grasmere on the Hudson, a mile or two above Ellerslie, and in April following, William Kelly was united in marriage to Miss Elizabeth Parr, already connected with the family by the marriage of her mother to Robert Kelly senior in 1819.

Immediately after the marriage of his brother, Robert Kelly and his wife sailed for England, the house in Washington Square was vacated and William Kelly removed with the entire establishment, to the property he had purchased on the Hudson, the mansion having been already fitted up for his permanent residence,— not his summer resort, but his *home*, in the fullest sense of that homely and most expressive Saxon word, HOME![1]

The return of Mr. Robert Kelly, with his family, from Europe, after an absence of a little less than two years, afforded to Mr. William Kelly an opportunity to go abroad with his wife and sister, his brother residing at Ellerslie, meantime, with their mother, taking charge of the estate

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[1] This estate, on which Mr. Kelly resided thirty years save one, and which has become so widely known, was originally patented to Abraham Kipp about the year 1737, whose son, of the same name, established a ferry across the Hudson many years before the war of the Revolution, the "Landing" at Rhinebeck being on his property. In the old records, the estate is called "Ellerslie," but by whom it was so named, is uncertain. "In 1814 the late Maturin Livingston purchased the property called Ellerslie, containing three hundred acres of land, lying between the stage road and the river, for the sum of five thousand dollars."

Mr. Livingston had married the daughter and only child of Gen. Morgan Lewis, who had been Governor of the State in 1804-7, and resided at Staatsburg, five miles below Ellerslie. Immediately following his purchase, Mr. Livingston erected the present mansion, from plans drawn by his wife, who selected the site, not only for the widely extended and unrivalled views that it commanded, but also, because she could look down, from it, upon the home of her girlhood, her father's house. But it was not her destiny to become the mistress of Ellerslie, the declining health

and carrying forward the planting, with the other improvements marked out and agreed upon.

After spending some months in England and Ireland, Mr. Wm. Kelly and family travelled on the continent, using their time to the best advantage, until the winter of '44 or spring of '45 when they returned to Ellerslie, and Mr. Robert Kelly, with his family, took up his residence in the city, which was thenceforth his home while he lived.

Thus far, these brothers had led a life, so to speak, in common; in all things moving and acting together. To speak of the one, was, of necessity, to speak of the other. In the language of the street, "they had retired from business," whereas, they had only been acquiring the means to engage in the real business of their lives.

Robert Kelly, while a merchant, had spent the evenings of eight months in every year as a student. To his thorough knowledge of the classics — for as a Greek scholar especially he had no superior — he added the Hebrew, and

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of her father and his advanced years, making it obligatory upon his only child to remain with him.

The property was therefore sold, in 1816, Mr. James Thompson being the purchaser. He completed the building, and resided there until his death; leaving it to his son James, after having added a hundred acres to his original purchase. James Thompson, the son, married a daughter of Harry Walter Livingston and went to Europe, where he resided a number of years. While in Europe, about the year 1827, Mr. Thompson sold the property to a Mr. Henry Warwick, who held it some three years, but owing to his pecuniary embarrassments, was compelled to make an assignment of his property to W. B. Platt Esq. of Rhinebeck, by whom it was conveyed to William Kelly in 1841.

The property thus purchased by Mr. Kelly, embraced four hundred acres of land, for which he paid Mr. Platt $42,000, and expended about $5,000, additional, in perfecting his title and clearing the property of all incumbrances. To get the estate in reasonable order after many years of neglect, to stock it and get the grounds into such condition as to produce crops, and to get his new business so systematized as to be under his perfect control, was the work of 1842 and the summer of 1843, by the end of which time he began to feel himself at home as a farmer, and in some degree, master of his business.

then became a master of the French, Spanish, Italian and German languages. He was one of the founders of the Greek Club, and of the "Column," afterwards merged in "Century Club," of New York city, a trustee of the New York University, of the Madison University, and subsequently of the University of Rochester. He was a trustee of the Clinton Hall Association, of the Mercantile Library Association, of the New York Society Library (being chairman of its board), Vice President of the Bank of Savings for Merchants' Clerks, President of the board of managers of the House of Refuge, President of the Board of Education "and might be regarded as the father of the Free Academy of the city of New York, the crowning glory of its free school system." At the time of his death he was Chamberlain of the City and a Regent of the University of the State. Was this a life of "elegant leisure and learned ease?"

William Kelly had chosen a different field, in some respects, for the attainment of the same general objects. And first, the improvement and embellishment of his property, occupied all the time its owner could spare from those duties of a public character which always demanded the larger portion of his time, and which he regarded as his legitimate business.

Gradually, and as he was able to carry out a thorough system of cultivation, over a wider domain, the estate was enlarged by the purchase of adjoining property, until it covered more than a thousand acres. In his last visit to England, he had looked at the various breeds of cattle then coming more prominently before the public, and not long after his return, he began to build up a herd of Short Horns; not for the purpose of entering the lists as a breeder, but, partly from his love of beautiful as well as profitable domestic animals to graze upon his own broad acres, and partly to improve, in a noiseless way, the native

stock of his less wealthy neighbors, by introducing into their herds the best Short Horn blood then known.

In the erection of his farm houses, barns and other structures, Mr. Kelly was his own architect, drawing out his own plans with a skill, taste, and sound judgment, seldom combined in the same individual. Indeed, the ten or a dozen barns on the property, from the large home barn, covering, with its deep and ample sheds, half an acre of ground, to the thirty and forty foot buildings scattered over the place for the convenient housing of the large hay crop — the great staple of the farm — all are uniform in their style, plain and simple, with a very few tasteful ornaments, unexpensive, but striking in their character, and producing a remarkably agreeable architectural effect.

An example of this style of building may be seen by travellers on the rail, or the river, at the private wharf one mile below Rhinecliff station, where stands the fine storehouse erected by Mr. Kelly, mainly for the purpose of receiving, baling, and shipping the hay crop of 700 or 800 tons annually.

At that wharf he received his manures, from the stables of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company across the river, from the refuse of the Onondaga Salt Works and from whatever sources he could obtain them. These were used, almost exclusively, as top dressings for meadows, very little grain being raised on the farm, it being an object to keep the entire property, as seen from the mansion, roads and drives, " dressed in robes of living green " so far as possible. Yet the farm proper, netted a very handsome sum yearly, the accounts being kept distinct from those of the pleasure grounds, gardens, wooded plantations and preserves, all the books being kept as accurately as those of the merchant.

Of a different order of buildings from those before named, but not less perfectly adapted to, and in keeping

with the objects for which they were designed, are those admirable structures for flowers and fruits — the orchid house, conservatory, green house, grapery, orchard house and garden house, filled to overflowing with the rarest and most beautiful plants to be found on the globe, with fruits the most delicious and perfect that cultivation has yet achieved.

But it is not within these structures that the highest forms of beauty, or the most exquisite developments of the master's tastes are found. They are found in all the Eden-like surroundings and appointments of that home, unique and matchless in its character among the homes of our land; — in the exquisite combinations of water, wood and broad expanse; — in the limitless profusion of flowers, and fruits, and never ending verdure; — in those velvet lawns forever green; — in bright glimpses of the noble river teeming with its snowy sails and smoking steamers, while along its shores rush the thundering railway trains loaded with the population and wealth of a State; — in those charming, ever-changing vistas, stretching away through the dense wild wood; — in those triumphs of the florists and the gardeners' skill that almost startle the wanderer as he comes upon them in some sequestered nook among the oaks and evergreens: — and, not the least, those distant openings, through the grand old trees, to catch the gorgeous sunsets beyond the western hills — all, all seem parts of one chaste design, complete, unique and perfect! And all these surroundings were in such keeping with the harmonious and beautiful life that reigned within, as to make one feel, if not to say, "surely *here* is happiness, even on earth!"

A few years ago, a friend of the family and frequent visitor at Ellerslie, was standing alone on a summer's eve, leaning, as was his wont, against a column of the southern portico and looking far away, sometimes on mountain,

wood, and stream, dimly outlined in the distance, and sometimes with closed eyelids, gazing into dreamland, scarcely knowing whether the objects pictured on his brain were fanciful, or real, so imperfect was the line of demarcation between the worlds of fancy and of fact, when a light footstep aroused him to consciousness, and a well-known voice inquired, why this guest was so often missed from the family circle at the evening hour, and found, always alone, in that vicinity? His answer was, "I always have the feeling, when I am standing here, alone, that I am nearer God, and heaven, than any where else; for to me, this seems too lovely for earth." A moment of silence, and then, in tones subdued almost to sadness, came the response — "Yes! all is beautiful, exceedingly! But sometimes the thought comes over me — *almost a fear* — that with all this beauty and loveliness without, harmony and peace within, *we* are having all *our* portion in this life!"

Was such a fear well grounded, and did William Kelly, in this princely home, bury himself in roses, and with his family lead a life of selfish enjoyment? From the very first he identified himself with the community in which he lived and contributed liberally in money and labor to every local improvement, especially to the improvement of all the public roads in his vicinity. To all the churches of Rhinebeck he was a generous contributor, and owned a pew in each, although a regular attendant at his own. He did much in his noiseless, unobtrusive way to improve the character of common schools by furnishing plans for commodious and tasteful school houses, selecting pleasant and appropriate sites for them, aiding in their erection and planting the grounds around them, visiting the schools, encouraging the teachers and instituting rewards for the scholars.

In the school nearest him — a perfect gem, by the way, standing on his own estate — not only was this system kept

up, and very frequent visits made to the school, (in which he served as trustee, librarian and accountant, collecting and disbursing its funds,) but every reward at the close of term, must bear the well known autograph of "William Kelly," or it was of no value in the eyes of the children. Providence seemed to deny him children of his own, that he might pour out his love upon the children of the people. Few men have ever been so loved — almost worshipped — by children, as Mr. Kelly. He understood them, and his views in regard to educating the tastes and refining the manners of children, might well be adopted by gentlemen of wealth, and carried out, practically, on large estates, somewhat as he carried them out. He reasoned somewhat like this—

"Children have an intuitive love for the beautiful, both in nature and in art. The children of the poor have few opportunities to gratify this taste, and in the cities, children of parents in good circumstances fare very little better, in this respect. In what way can this love of the beautiful be so easily gratified, and turned to so good account in educating their tastes, as by introducing these children to the grounds, and flowers, and gardens of Ellerslie"?

And so, with that perfect system which characterized all his business, he arranged pic-nic grounds, in a beautiful grove by the river, fitting it up with swings and seats and tables and every convenience for the entertainment of a steamboat load of children, with their teachers and parents and friends, as often as three or four times a week, from the end of haying until the close of the warm season. Landing at his private wharf, before mentioned, these parties were met by some person belonging to the estate, whose duty it was to conduct them to the pic-nic grounds, where they found a spring of water and barrels of ice, and an abundance of every thing that could contribute to their comfort.

After enjoying themselves in the groves and woods along the river, and emptying their lunch baskets, their teachers conducted them through the pleasure grounds, down by the lake, over the bridge, through the fruit gardens and conservatories, and wherever else they chose to wander, in, what seemed to them, a fairy land. These visits to Ellerslie, were looked forward to with the greatest delight, from year to year, by thousands of children in Sunday schools, day schools and other institutions, permits being applied for, months in advance, that Mr. Kelly might so arrange the time, as to give each party a different day, and the exclusive use of the grounds.

As a proof of the elevating and refining influences of such education, Mr. Kelly stated, a year or two ago, that not a single act of vandalism, not even the unauthorized plucking of a flower, or the appropriation of one cluster of fruit, had ever come to his knowledge; and that the breaking of the handle of a vase, was the only accident that had ever occurred on the place, in all the years through which the summer visits of these thousands upon thousands of children had then extended. Was he not right in saying, that "he knew of no way in which the expenditure of a few hundred dollars could produce better results?"

But were these gorgeous flowers and luscious fruits grown only to gratify the eye of visitors to the orchard houses and conservatories, but to be plucked only for the owner's pleasure? The reply comes up from a thousand homes made richer and purer by these priceless offerings — from the homes of poverty and of plenty — from the sick chamber of the cottage as of the mansion — from the dwellers in the distant city, and along the river, and those homes that cluster around Ellerslie — "where are these offerings *not* known?"

So too in regard to Mr. Kelly's Short Horn and Jersey bloods; their use, for grading, being almost as free to his

neighbors, as in his own herd; while the surplus of his pure blood male animals were quite as frequently *given* away, as sold, to those deserving but not wealthy farmers who wished to improve their herds, in this, and other States.

It was in the year 1851 that Mr. Kelly became a life member of this society and immediately he was known as one of its most active members, exhibiting his blooded stock at the fairs of the society so long, only, as was needful that the merits of Short Horn blood should be appreciated by the public, and then stepped aside, that the lists might be more free to professional breeders and stock men. His interest in the society was constant, and from the time he entered it, never flagged. In 1852 he became a member of Executive Committee and in 1854 was President of the society. His connection with the board as its most valued counsellor, and his active participation in all that belonged to the society, ceased only with his life. This society can never know the extent of its obligations to Mr. Kelly for the unceasing vigilance, unrivalled tact and liberal use of his own time, labor and money, in watching over the business details of the Secretary's Office during the last years of Col. Johnson, who loved him with singular devotion, trusted implicitly to his judgment and leaned upon his strong arm as upon a father's.

So admirable were Mr. Kelly's arrangements for business and so perfect the system adopted on his estate, that he was able to be absent two or three days every week, with occasional trips to other States involving a longer absence, without interfering with his home work, and the improvements that were continually going on. His farmer, with his well defined duties, carried on his own department, reporting to, and receiving his instructions directly from Mr. Kelly, to whom he was responsible for the sixteen to twenty men under his charge. The chief gardener

was, in the same manner, responsible to him for the management of the home grounds, with all their accessories, and the control of ten or twelve men in his employ. So, too, of the herdsman, and the dairy farmer, each independent of the others, and receiving orders from the one master, to whom they were severally responsible. Last, but certainly not least in efficiency and importance, was the head coachman, who for nearly twenty years was Mr. Kelly's faithful attendant and confidential messenger.

Sitting one day as Chairman of a Board of Directors in a neighboring state where he had been detained longer than usual, a package of letters was handed to Mr. Kelly. To some questions from his associates, he playfully replied, "These are reports from the bureau of the home department." Not quite comprehending him, he explained, "that the weekly report must be made to him in person, if at home, or forwarded to him if absent, as now," and added, "possibly some of you gentlemen might be amused, if not instructed, to know how business goes in the master's absence;" and passed the papers around the table. Greatly were these gentlemen surprised at the intelligence, system and business character which these reports indicated. Years of faithful service on the one hand, justice, kindness and generosity on the other, made the employees at Ellerslie the devoted friends of the employer and his family, and as friends they were regarded.

A year or so before Mr. Kelly's departure for England, after having closed the affairs of 1871 and put the finishing clause to his last will and testament — a model for its clearness and simplicity — instead of sending for legal gentlemen, or wealthy neighbors, he called in three trusted friends — his coachman, his gardener and his farmer — to witness this important document.

In our country, where changes in the personnel of a large establishment are so frequent, where the servants and

employees of yesterday, are a hundred miles away to-day, there is an indescribable pleasure to those who visit a family year after year, to find the same welcome, not from host and hostess only, but beaming from the faces of the humbler members of the household, who, with the family and its guests, have bowed together around the family altar at the offering of the evening sacrifice, through the many, many by-gone years. And this it was that added another charm to the home at Ellerslie![1]

The opening of the Hudson River Railroad effected a great change in the habits, business associations and home life of residents on the banks of the river, as well as in the management and valuation of landed property. As it must cut through the whole length of his property, not only invading the quiet of his country retreat, but cutting off his entire river front, Mr. Kelly was naturally averse to the project; but as it would be a great public benefit, and the demands of business would soon make it a necessity, with his usual good sense and business tact he espoused the interests of the road, became a large stockholder, gave the right of way along the river and made his services to the company invaluable. His liberality and eminent services, won for him what the law could not have awarded him; for with an earnest desire to injure his property as little as possible, and secure to him as many river advantages as the nature of the case would admit, his wharfing grounds were left undisturbed, and a tunnel was cut

[1] It will be a consolation to those who have so long regarded Ellerslie as the model residence of a country gentleman, as well as the highest school of instruction for the florist and landscape gardener, to know, that this magnificent estate is not to be sold, and that no changes will be made in its management save such as are unavoidable, involving, probably the entire breaking up of the Short Horn herd, a process that has been going on for some two or three years — in fact, ever since Mr. Kelly's declining strength prevented him from giving to his animals the personal attention they had before received.

through the rocky headland that juts into the Hudson, away to the west of the mansion.

And this was an illustration of Mr. Kelly's manner of meeting such difficulties. His interests were opposed to such a road, not only for the reasons alluded to, and others equally obvious, but because he was a heavy stockholder in the river steamboats. So soon, however, as it became probable that sufficient money could be raised to build and equip such a road, he took hold of it in earnest, and was, for thirteen years, a strong power in the management of its affairs. Always, if in the carrying out of any business scheme in which he was interested opposition was raised by other parties, those parties were invited to join himself and friends in their enterprise; if troublesome stockholders were found in a company, they were invited to a seat in the board of directors; if resolutions committing an association, in a way that he deemed objectionable, were presented, his unvarying courtesy would always secure from their mover the privilege of making some slight verbal change before being put to vote — a change that subsequent examination would show to have entirely eliminated the objectionable features. It was this extraordinary ability to so incorporate the harmless features, only, of discordant resolutions, in the very words of the original, as to satisfy their authors and yet record his own opinion, which, joined to his sound judgment, broad views, great experience and dignified courtesy, left him without a peer in boards, councils and deliberative assemblies.

Another strong feature in Mr. Kelly's character was, his singleness of purpose and perfect devotion to the particular business, or object for which he might, at any particular time, be laboring. His thorough acquaintance with all the details of the enterprise, with its matériel and personnel — with its liabilities and its assets — with its plans for the future and the agencies for carrying them

forward, would cause a looker on to suppose, that William Kelly was making this enterprise the main business and specialty of his life.

To a gentleman visiting Ellerslie — a member of this society if you please, knowing him only as thousands knew him,— as they met him in our society from year to year — to such a person visiting Mr. Kelly at his home, and there watching his mode of life for one, two, or even three days, perhaps, he seemed a gentleman of elegant leisure and literary ease, enjoying his well stored library, luxuriating in all the beauty of the unrivalled landscape around him, and giving himself no cares for the outer world. The guest would be told at the morning meal, perhaps, that such, and such, and such plans, for the day's enjoyment had been marked out, in any one of which he could join, or use his time in any other way that might best please him — to which Mr. Kelly would probably add, "I shall be obliged to leave you to the ladies for an hour or two this morning, unless you prefer taking a seat in my wagon for a rough ride over the place." That ride, always a pleasant one, took the visitor among the cattle, to the stock barns, the dairy establishment, the farm establishment, the various working parties, the fruit and vegetable gardens, orchard houses, conservatories and compost grounds, finishing up, perhaps at the coach house and stables — all showing Mr. Kelly a thorough master of his home business, the motive power and conductor in every project, and holding in his own hands the entire direction of all matters on the estate; — business enough, you say, for any one man.

But, with the closing hours of the day and the retirement of his guests to their respective chambers, the *real* labors of the host began. Letters of friendship it may be well supposed he had his full share of: but look over the shoulder of this gentleman of leisure, as he writes, far

past the midnight hour! To whom are these piles of business letters addressed, that he is so busily engaged in answering? To the Hon. Wm. Kelly, director in the Hudson River Rail Road; in the N. Jersey Steam Boat Company — the Peoples' Line of Steam Boats; in the Rhinebeck Bank; in the Mechanics' Bank of New York City; in the New York Life & Trust Co.; in the World Mutual Life Insurance Co.; in the 8th and 9th Avenue Rail Road Companies; in the Rhinebeck & Connecticut Rail Road Co.; trustee of the Hudson River Insane Asylum; trustee of the Drew Theological Seminary; President of the Baptist Educational Commission and of the Baptist Home Mission Society; of the Board of Trustees of Rochester University and of Vassar Female College; Chairman of the Executive and Finance Committees of the New York State Agricultural College while it existed, and afterwards trustee of the Cornell University, in which it was merged. All these, with innumerable personal and private trusts as executor, administrator and guardian, would seem to be all that one man could attend to: yet his *real* business, as a *business man*, for many years, has not been named.

It would scarcely be suspected, even by those who knew him well in this society, that Wm. Kelly was one of the foremost Iron masters of the day, being largely engaged in iron and coal, from Lake Superior to Virginia. To this industry Mr. Kelly gave great attention, especially to the reduction of the Lake Superior ores at the furnaces in Ohio, by means of the black coals of Mahoning Valley, and to the manufacture of a superior quality of iron in the Broad Top Mountain region of Pennsylvania. At the time of his decease he was largely interested in the Iron Cliff Company and the Jackson Iron Company of Michigan, the Himrod Furnace Company, and the Mahoning Coal Company, of Ohio, as also in the Kemble Coal and Iron Company of Pennsylvania.

Of the two companies last named he was President, carrying their busy affairs in his mind and directing their energies with as much interest and accuracy as he directed the work of his farm.

Perhaps no man of our day has accomplished so much in so *quiet* and noiseless a manner as William Kelly. Courteous, social, and conversing freely on almost every topic of general interest with those he met daily, and who supposed they knew him and his affairs very thoroughly, it was very rarely indeed that he ever mentioned his own connection with any institution, industry, or business of any kind, to a person not connected with, or conversant with these enterprises. With great self reliance, (and consciousness of power which he *must* have had,) yet with a horror of ostentation that made him shrink from the public gaze, with a modesty amounting almost to bashfulness, a refined delicacy of feeling that scarcely belongs to our sex, he shunned notoriety and avoided public appearance whenever he could, with any propriety, be excused, finding his highest pleasure in working silently for the good of his fellow men, whom he recognized as brethren of his own blood.

All these great productive industries in which he was concerned, he managed solely as a steward, accountable to the Master for all the returns, and for their judicious re-investment for the Master's further use. It was not from cornering in stocks, nor speculating in gold, nor from large interest on untaxed bonds that Mr. Kelly was enabled to contribute so largely, and for so many years, to educational, religious, benevolent and other objects that his judgment approved, but from the legitimate earnings of wisely directed industry, which not only gave ample returns to the capitalist, but to the workmen employed, to the communities built up around their busy establishments, and to the nation itself.

To such a man as is here presented, the trickery and machinery of politics must, of necessity, be distasteful, and though a pronounced, uncompromising democrat of the old school, he could not be induced to allow himself to become a candidate for office until the autumn of 1855, when his desire to see certain laws placed on the statute books, caused him to run for the State Senate. He was elected by a large majority, in a close district, running ahead of his ticket by five hundred votes.

Of his course as a Senator but one opinion was ever held, whether by republican or democrat, and it would be difficult to say, whether he was more often consulted by his political friends, or by their opponents. A case so rare can only be accounted for by referring it to that irresistible conviction of his perfect fairness which forced itself upon the minds of all who knew him. His position and standing in the Senate are so clearly defined by the Hon. Henry R. Selden, at that time Lieutenant Governor and President of the Senate, that no apology is needed for introducing a portion of Judge Selden's remarks at the last meeting of the alumni of the Rochester University, in June last.

"My personal acquaintance with Mr. Kelly commenced in the beginning of 1857, under circumstances somewhat peculiar, which may, I hope, excuse what would otherwise be unpardonable here, an allusion to myself. Mr. Kelly was then a member of the Senate, over which, with no acquaintance with the practice of legislative bodies, I was called to preside. The Senate, in its political character, was equally divided, which rendered it possible for political partisanship to make my position a difficult and unpleasant one, and it was not without some anxiety in this respect that I entered upon the discharge of my duties. That none of my fears were realized was largely due, as I believe, to the manliness and generosity of character of Mr. Kelly, and

to the great, though quiet, control which he exercised over the action of his political friends. As a stranger and political opponent I had no special claims to his kindness, but I soon found in him a most valued and faithful friend, and the friendship thus commenced suffered no diminution during his life.

"Mr. Kelly was a Senator, worthy of that time-honored name, not a mere partisan but a Statesman, possessed of perfect independence of judgment — remarkably attentive to the duties of his station — and sensitive to the last degree, in regard to the honor and dignity of the body of which he was a most conspicuous member. His political convictions were strong, and he maintained his opinions with great modesty and gentleness — with unfailing courtesy towards friends and foes — with the most perfect respect to opposing opinions — but with invincible firmness.

"If, with his well balanced mind, he possessed any quality in excess, it was that of modesty, which, notwithstanding his decision of character, rendered him in a measure undemonstrative, even diffident, and prevented him from holding that very commanding position to which his admirable character and great abilities entitled him. Among his associates were able and excellent men, but it is not too much to say in his behalf that in diligence and skill to acquire a perfect understanding of the subject in hand whatever it might be, in clearness, liberality and comprehensiveness of views, he had no superior, and in the qualities of an accomplished gentleman he had no peer.

"To some extent a partisan, he was always ready to aid his party friends in the fair attainment of any party object which his judgment approved, but with him the statesman was far above the partisan. Under no political party exigency could he be induced to countenance, much less to support, any measure savoring in the least degree, in his view, of unfairness or dishonor.

"When he left the Senate, whatever differences of political opinion might exist between him and other members, I am quite sure that he left behind him none but personal friends — none who did not regard him, not only with sincere affection, but with profound respect. His was a character without reproach. Whenever, in the progress of the great work which this institution has before it, it can send forth into the world men like him, taking his life in all its aspects, private and public, as a pattern, it may safely pronounce its work well done.

"I am aware that I have spoken but coldly of one whose heart throbbed always with the warmest and noblest impulses of human nature. A knowledge of the tenderness of sorrow warns me of my inability to touch with sufficient delicacy the severed chords of affection which bound him to his more intimate friends, and in this presence, where there are many who knew him much longer, and whose relations to him were far more intimate than mine, it does not become me to say more."

On leaving the Senate, Mr. Kelly's intention was, to have no more to do with political affairs, partly, because the associations were often repugnant to his whole being, and partly, because of the constantly increasing demands upon his time, and energies, for other purposes. But, aside from these causes, he had no heart to go into the great world except as duty led him. A heavy blow had fallen upon him, the previous year, from which he seemed never, fully, to recover — the death of his only remaining and dearly beloved brother — loved through his childhood, loved and guarded in his youth, loved and honored in his manhood with ever increasing respect and devotion.

"It is needless to speak here of Robert Kelly whose memory will long be cherished in the city of New York as a scholar of rare attainments, a man of ripe judgment, of extensive benevolence and of matchless energy. His death

which occurred on the 29th of April 1856 was felt as a calamity to the city which he had so long labored to benefit." This paragraph, from one of the papers of that day, may be appropriately supplemented by one from the pen of President Anderson, pronounced over the remains of *our* friend, as they were about to be laid in the vault by the side of that brother's.

"In all the years," said Dr. Anderson, "since the death of his brother Robert, William Kelly seemed to me to bear about with him a widowed heart. Their names are so connected by their more than fraternal affection, that even now, I can not separate them from each other. Their unity of aim and feeling was so entire that they have seemed to me complements each of the other, forming, together, the magnificent proportions of an ideal man. I count it one of the selectest blessings of my life that I have enjoyed the friendship and I trust, the confidence of William and Robert Kelly."

Had it not been for Wm. Kelly's Christian hope, and the strong faith by which he walked, rather than by sight, the deep sadness of heart that followed his brother's decease, would have become a settled melancholy; but against this feeling he rallied all his energies. The care and guardianship of his brother's widow and children, was a loving trust that was most faithfully discharged, and in these duties he found a mournful solace for his, and their loss. So, too, in the fulfilment of plans mutually agreed upon to be carried forward by the surviving brother, should one be taken away — as in the case of Rochester University; Robert being President of the Board of Trustees, with the understanding, that if he should die before the accomplishment of certain purposes, his brother William, if living, should go into the Board of Trustees. Wm. Kelly did go into the Board at its next election, and was its President from that time until his decease.

In 1860, the alarming aspect of our public affairs and the excited condition of our whole people, filled Mr. Kelly's mind with the deepest anxiety, and long before it came, he knew that war *must* come, unless wiser counsels prevailed than those put forth by party leaders. Although the course pursued by a large portion of his own party was in opposition to his own views, yet in the faint hope of being able to reconcile *some* conflicting interests, allay party strife and at least to do what he might to bring the moral power of a great State to withstand the revolutionary spirit then beginning to organize and take substantial form, he accepted the nomination of the democratic state convention of that year for the office of Governor —a nomination made by acclamation, without an effort on his part, without a pledge, or a promise, of any kind whatsoever. But the overwhelming strength of the republican party overcame the efforts of his friends, retaining Gov. Morgan in office for the next two years, and placing Abraham Lincoln in the Presidential chair.

As he had long predicted, the war came, and though he never hesitated to say that he regarded the war as unnecessary and easily to have been avoided, yet when it did come, he put himself to the work like a true patriot, giving his time and his money freely to the cause, aiding to raise regiments for the field and following all military movements with intelligent scrutiny; keeping himself thoroughly posted by constant correspondence with the best informed officers in the field, and through them rather than through the press, and the self constituted almoners of a nation's bounty, seeking the most judicious objects for the contributions of himself and his friends.

In the month of October, 1864, the arbitrary arrest of the New York State Agents in the city of Washington, caused Gov. Seymour to appoint Judge Amasa J. Parker, Judge Wm. F. Allen and Hon. William Kelly commis-

missioners to represent the State at Washington and appeal to the President for the release of the Agents. They did wait upon the President and were by him referred to the War Minister. The result is a matter of history, and in a paper like this, need not be followed. With his brother commissioners, Mr. Kelly returned home, to await the progress of events; well assured in his own mind, from what he knew to be correct information in regard to the internal affairs of the Confederacy, that it must fall, with the first movements of the federal forces in the coming spring. These expectations were realized, hostilities ceased, and the war ended.

During the war, Mr. Kelly had kept up correspondence with many of his old personal friends in Maryland, in parts of Virginia, and in Kentucky, with occasional letters, through army channels, to old business friends in other states; so that he was enabled, at an early day, after the cessation of hostilities, to communicate with them and obtain information in regard to their condition. Many of them had suffered greatly during the war, some had been reduced to poverty, and almost every one to great pecuniary embarrassments. To lend these suffering ones a helping hand and enable them again to resume business, he assumed as a Christian duty, and discharged it as he did all other duties, reaping even here, a rich reward. Could the private correspondence, locked up at Ellerslie, be spread out before Mr. Kelly's intimate friends, they would be astonished at the numberless ramifications into which his thoughtful benevolence extended, and which never would have been known to others but for the grateful letters of acknowledgement. A single example by way of illustration.

About the year 1832, or 1833, a certain Colonel in one of the Cotton States, who had been doing business with the Kellys for several years, came to New York and entering their counting room, inquired for Mr. Kelly. William

Kelly, young as he was, even more youthful in appearance than in years, replied "I am Mr. Kelly." "No, no! I want to see the head of the house, your father perhaps — Mr. *William* Kelly." The reply — "Our father, Mr. *Robert* Kelly died in 1825 — I am William Kelly" — utterly astonished the visitor. "Is it possible that you, young man, are the *William Kelly* I have been corresponding with these ten years? I am Col. ....., of ....." It is needless to say, that he was soon satisfied and ever after was a warm friend of Mr. Kelly.

He had been a great sufferer by the war, indeed almost ruined; several of his sons had been killed, he was beginning to feel the weight of years, and that his condition was well nigh hopeless, when a letter reached him with words of kindness, and proffers of assistance to resume his business. Matters were speedily arranged for him, and by close attention to his business, the remaining years of his life were passed in comfort, if not in his former affluence. To the day of his death, which did not long precede that of his friend, the final expression of every letter from the sturdy old Colonel was, "William Kelly, I love you!" That was enough. It was from the very depths of the Colonel's heart!

With the exception of a seat in the Philadelphia convention held in August 1866, for the purpose of taking measures to re-establish the State Governments of the south, and to check the aggressions of the Federal government, Mr. Kelly took no active part in politics after the election of Mr. Lincoln, but devoted himself, more and more, to educational and philanthropic enterprises,— until his failing health in '70 and '71 compelled him to lay many of them aside. His eyes, which had been severely taxed through all his life, were the first to give way and he was obliged to avail himself of the eyes of others.

Though no child of his own had grown up to call Wil-

liam Kelly by the sacred name of Father, there were those who had been reared in his family, almost from childhood, who gave to him such love and reverence as no ties of blood could have strengthened. To one of these, whose guardian he had been, and whom he styles in his will "my dear companion and friend," — he entrusted all his affairs that demanded writing. Still Mr. Kelly gained but very little. A low fever was upon him during all the summer of 1870, which he had not strength to throw off, and a general debility of the whole system followed.

With the spring of 1871 Mr. Kelly seemed to improve — but the improvement was more apparent than real. Still he moved among his fellow men, whereever his presence was needful, and however much he suffered, he gave no sign. At the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of Rochester University in June '71, (the last over which Mr. Kelly presided,) at the close of a most important session, during which he had displayed even more than his usual quiet power and guided the deliberations with consummate skill, he retired to his own private parlor for a few hours of repose, remarking at the same time to a very intimate friend, "I fear that it is becoming unsafe to trust me any more in positions of responsibility." To the "why?" of his friend, Mr. Kelly replied, "During the last three hours of the session, I was utterly unable to see a single person in the room, and only identified the speakers by their voices."

A voyage across the Atlantic had been under discussion for more than a year, but both Mr. Kelly and his family were averse to leaving home, and it was not until late in October, '71, that the absolute necessity for getting beyond the reach of business calls, to some place where perfect quiet and uninterrupted rest could be obtained, prevailed over all other considerations.

On the 15th of November '71 Mr. Kelly sailed for Liver-

pool, in the Wyoming, accompanied by his wife, his sister and one who had grown up in their family as a daughter, with his nephew, Mr. Robert Kelly, who had returned from Europe but a few days previous —just in time to accompany his uncle's family and relieve them from all care in their journeyings. His friend, and ours, Mr. James O. Sheldon, Ex-President of this Society, with his family, were fellow passengers with the Kellys, seeking in a milder clime the health denied to Mrs. Sheldon on this side the Atlantic.

The voyage told severely upon Mr. Kelly's strength, but after his arrival in England and a little rest, he seemed better, and was able to move about a little. But the cold, damp fogs of London affected him unfavorably and a change became necessary. Leaving Mr. Sheldon in London about the middle of December, the Kellys removed to the southern coast of England and took up their residence at Torquay, in Devonshire.

In the pure mild air of that delightful climate, and with the home-like comforts of the Belgrave Hotel, Mr. Kelly improved, very perceptibly, and his friends, on both sides of the ocean, were cheered with the hope of his speedy recovery. But the cold fastened upon him in London could not be thrown off and dangerous symptoms were soon developed. He continued to sink, until the night of Sunday the 14th of January, 1872, when the sixty-five years record of a singularly noble, pure and useful life was closed, in perfect peace and in the presence of those most near and dear to him.

Mr. Sheldon, then at Nice, was telegraphed, and with his well known kindness hastened to join the family, now left desolate. Arrangements were made for their immediate return to the United States, but owing at first, to circumstances beyond their control, and subsequently in obedience to medical advice, they remained in England

until the 11th of April, when they sailed in the Adriatic, and arrived in New York on the 21st, bringing with them the coffined form, only, of him whose spirit had gone up to Him who gave it.

The funeral was attended at the Tabernacle Baptist Church, at two o'clock p. m., on the 25th of April. Long before the hour for service, the aisles of the church were thronged by rich and poor; by the retainers on the estate at Ellerslie; by the many recipients of his bounties in by-gone years — some occupying stations of honor and trust, others living in comfort and usefulness — by personal and by family friends who had come to stand for a moment by the coffin and drop a tear, mayhap, over the remains, of one so revered and enshrined in their affections. Rev. Dr. Wm. R. Williams, a life long friend, preached the sermon; a beautiful portraiture of a noble life and as truthful as it was beautiful. Rev. Dr. Anderson, President of Rochester University, delivered an address, and other distinguished clergymen, of whom a large number were present, took part in the solemn and touching services. The procession moved from the church to the Marble Cemetery in Second street, and there deposited, in the family vault, all that was mortal of William Kelly.

The comments of the Press, both when the intelligence of his death was received in this country, and at the time of his funeral, were uniform in the expression of profound respect for the man, while the utterances of those who were admitted to his friendship, would appear exaggerated to those who only knew him at a distance. The words of Prof. Kendrick at the National Baptist Educational Convention held in Philadelphia in May last expressed this idea, when he said, "I felt in drawing up this resolution that any thing which expressed adequately my own feelings would seem in a public resolution, improperly hyperbolical."

Do not the hearts of some, yes, many, in this society, endorse this further expression of Dr. Kendrick and make it their own? He said "I feel that it was one of the privileges of my life to be acquainted with Mr. Kelly. I feel that it was an honor and a benefit to know him; to meet that genial smile; to meet that unfailing gentlemanliness and urbanity with which you were sure to be always greeted, and to come in contact with a character that, in every relation, alike public and private, seemed to me to be as near perfection as any character with which it has been my privilege in life to become acquainted. His home was an earthly paradise, alike in its external appointments and in the sweet and gentle influence that presided over it. From that home radiated and went forth an influence in every direction, of which it would be difficult to say whether it were more potent or benignant."

Said Dr. Anderson, as he looked down upon the coffin in the Tabernacle church "After more than twenty years acquaintance with him around whose remains we have met to-day, I can recall no word or action which I would wish blotted out or forgotten. This is not the unguarded utterance of one in whom personal affection has warped and weakened the capacity for cool and critical judgment. I know that there are many here to-day who have known William Kelly longer and more intimately than I, who would, from the very depths of the heart join with me in this expression."

Such were the opinions of strong-minded and thoughtful men in other walks of life than those in which *we* met him. How well they accord with the feeling and the judgment of those so long associated with him in this Society, the unwonted expressions and overpowering feelings exhibited at our last annual meeting abundantly testify. If Mr. Kelly's long continued and valuable services to this Society, and his interest in everything pertaining to rural

life, have not been specially dwelt upon in this paper, it is because the society has already placed upon its records, in the "Transactions for 1871," its appreciation of his exalted worth as a man, his enlightened devotion to the great interests of agriculture, and its recognition of his great services to the Society.

The especial object for which this paper has been prepared, is, not to present Mr. Kelly as the successful merchant: or as the skillful financier, able to retire with a fortune before he was thirty years of age; not as the master of a noble domain on which he resided like a Country Gentleman of the olden day dispensing a refined and elegant hospitality — not, even, to hold him up for admiration, or example, as a friend of education, a patron of universities and colleges, a worker in, and contributor to, almost every religious and benevolent object of the day; but rather to show William Kelly, the MAN, in his pure, unselfish and noble simplicity!

He was not perfect. Sometimes, even in his manhood, the hot Irish blood that coursed in his veins would, for an instant, yet only for an instant, suffuse his cheeks; but, you looked again, and it had disappeared — and the blue of his eye would be as sweet and sunny as the summer sky over which the thunder cloud has flitted. Possibly there might, sometimes, be an indication of an iron will, but you looked at the man with his great, massive brain and open, manly countenance, and listened to his fair, unvarnished statement — and confessed yourself in error. At home and abroad, in the house and by the way, he was ever the same dignified, courteous, gentle, social, warm hearted gentleman.

What was the secret of William Kelly's power over himself — a power that gave him such mastery over others? The answer is clear, distinct and simple. William Kelly lived, ever, as in a school that was to prepare him for a

higher life; and as in a school the disciple seeks the counsel and cultivates the friendship of his teacher, so in the school of the world, William Kelly early studied the science of life under the teachings of the Divine Master, whose friendship he faithfully and reverently cultivated and whose precepts he accepted with undoubting faith, counting all for whom that Master died, his brethren. To him, the injunction of the apostle "honor all men," was a divine command and it was one of his strong characteristics, that he recognized in the person of the most lowly, that divine image which made even the beggar his peer.

To the divine model he earnestly and uniformly endeavored to conform his own life. With the humility and meekness of childhood he sought direction from above continually. In the morning, at noon, and in the evening, for a little while he was unseen of men, from whose presence he had glided away, that he might bow the knee before Him who seeth in secret, and when he came forth, it was with more than his own strength to do the Master's work.

Said the Rev. Dr. Williams, his friend and pastor for many years — "Could claims to the favor of a holy God and to the bliss of heaven rest on morality and beneficence and in the wide and systematic usefulness to his fellow men, where could we look to see a fairer right established to such blessedness than in behalf of William Kelly? But he relied, as he often and earnestly acknowledged, on the Redeemer's sacrifice and the efficacy of Christ's finished righteousness. In his very last days and to a near member of his family he spoke of the error of seeming — to use his own emphatic phrase, 'to wish to eke out the righteousness of Christ by merits of our own.' His trust in that Savior's work was confiding, unqualified and entire." And thus did our friend lay him down in his last sleep.

Gentlemen of the Society! You, especially, who are in early manhood and in the prime of life! The fully rounded,

well-proportioned character of William Kelly, though imperfectly and but partially delineated, is held up for your study and imitation. Whatever may be your position in society, you can emulate his noble simplicity, his spotless purity, his gentle courtesy, his unswerving integrity and his child-like faith. To this State, the example of William Kelly as a MAN, in all that constitutes true manhood, as a Citizen, in all the multitudinous points through which he touched his fellow men, and as a Christian Gentleman of the fairest type — is a rare legacy and of priceless value. It is with the hope that this legacy bequeathed to us by our beloved friend may be made available in the true education and training of many young men in our State, that this memorial is presented to the New York State Agricultural Society.

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